

From the Chair

By: Jennifer McDaniel, Administrative Assistant, Department of Veterans Affairs, US Army Veteran



Because Courage is Never Forgotten

For those of you that were present in a crisp, new conference room at Department of Revenue on March 23rd, you were witness to a small but mighty group of warriors being honored for their courage and sacrifice during the Vietnam War.

These were Vietnam Veterans that are also State employees. They were invited by the State VERG so that they could be shown the appreciation and gratitude for their service that was earned by them so many years ago. March 30th is Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day and the VERG could not let that day pass without recognizing our fellow veterans that served so courageously during a most difficult time in our Nation's history.

It was a day of appreciation and celebration and also a day of remembrance. Remembrance for those that were lost and for those that could not attend due to burdens of the heart and mind that they still carry.

Some were able to reconnect with old friends and fellow service members that served on the same ship in the Pacific bound for Vietnam, demonstrating how connected we really are. It was a time of fellowship among veterans and there were even a few new friends made.

Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, Director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs highlighted the need for this generation of veterans to connect with the benefits that have been earned by them and are available to them before they retire from State service. She also emphasized that all veterans from this era are Vietnam War veterans even if they did not serve "in country" and are deserving of the respect and dignity being bestowed upon them.

Alfie spoke of the climate that some of these veterans returned home to back in the days of the war when America could not separate its fear and frustration of the war and its politics with the troops that were forced to fight it. Returning soldiers were not welcomed as they should have been and as they are now.

But in that room, Soldiers were Soldiers, Marines were Marines, the language was the same and everyone was welcome.

The VERG, WDVA, and The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration bestowed upon each Vietnam Veteran present, a commemorative lapel pin to honor their military service and express the message that "A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You."

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Here's the photo album link from the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Event for the VERG:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/98326753@N03/albums/72157679452939092>

Earth Day

By: Casey Swenson, Management Analyst, Department of Ecology (ECY), US Army Veteran

Why April has Earth Day

In 1969 the idea to create Earth Day came to Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis) after years of observing one environmental incident after another. From his vision, and with the help of like minded others, environmentalist movements and rallies began to form around the nation demonstrating against air and water pollution.

Seattle, 1969, Sen. Nelson announced the birth of Earth Day inviting the world to join the celebration. Celebrate they did. Thousands of individuals rallied around the United States to establish environmental and conservation groups. The State of Washington would create the Department of Ecology on February 12, 1970. A short time later, President Nixon created the U.S. EPA to protect the environment and public health. In the course of ten years, we would see legislation pass such as the Clean Air Act (1970), Clean Water Act (1972), Safe Drinking Water Act (1974), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (1976) to name a few.

Today billions celebrate Earth Day in over 174 countries making Earth Day the largest secular civic event in the world. Yet, there is still so much to be done to combat climate change, and sustainability of our resources. We here at Ecology are proud of our accomplishments as are other Departments such as Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife among many other agencies from all levels. We remain committed to protecting our environment for future generations.

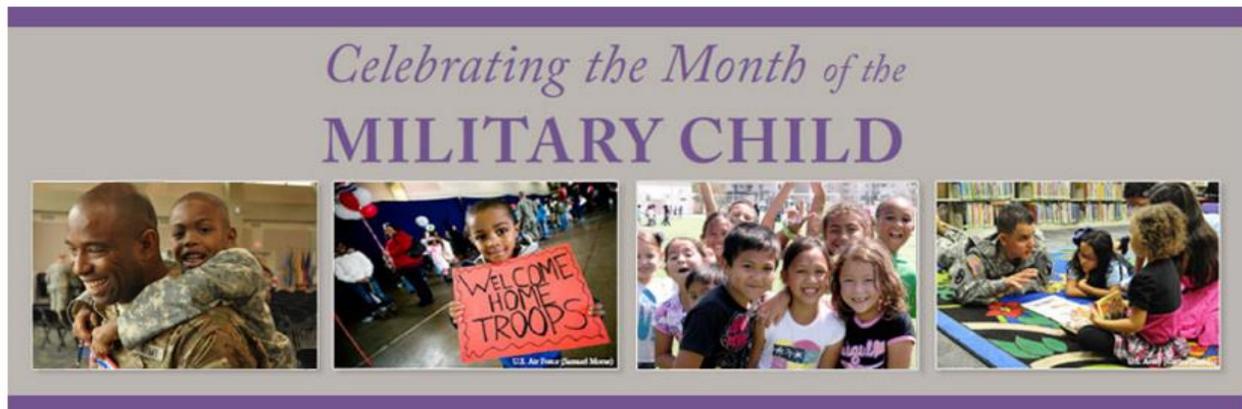
There are ways you too can contribute, such as planting native trees and shrubs, collecting debris from highways, coastal beaches, and parks. How about volunteering to work in your local public gardens to grow sustainable foods for all? How about walking and riding your bike more or carpooling to work? Groups such as the Washington Conservation Corps are always looking for people and have the resources to give you information about how you can be a part of making our world a better, healthier place to live. Get with your organization, and see what they are doing for the environment. See how you can help. **Happy Earth Day!**



Upcoming Events

EVENT	DATE(s)	TIME	CITY
WWI: The War to End All Wars Exhibit	4/2017	1100	Spokane
Navy Band Performance	4/6/17	1200-1300	Olympia
National Guard Day 2017	4/7/17	0700-13:30	Olympia
WA Serves Training	4/ 7,11,20,& 25 2017	1100-1200	Internet
Traumatic Brain Injury Conference	4/10 - 11/ 2017	0845	Seattle
Mariners Salute to Armed Forces	4/15/17	1800	Seattle
Small Business Symposium	4/18/17	0800-1600	Bremerton
Veteran Networking and Hiring Event	4/19/17	1100-1400	JBLM
Patriotic Music Performance	4/19/17	1200-1300	Olympia
Vietnam War Commeroration	4/20/17	1400-2200	Puyallup
Walk for Veterans	4/21/17	1300	Long Beach
Vietnam Veterans Appreciation Luncheon	4/22/17	1200	Freeland
Stand Down/Services to Homeless Veterans	4/29/17	1000-1400	Bremerton

Click on the Event Titles to see more details about these events.



The Month of the Military Child, April 2017

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. Sponsored by the Department of Defense Military Community and Family Policy, the Month of the Military Child is a time to applaud military families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome.

The Month of the Military Child is part of the legacy left by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. He established the Defense Department commemoration in 1986.



: <http://www.dodea.edu/dodeaCelebrates/MilitaryChild/2017.cfm>

Veterans Spotlight: Josh Jackson, Department of Social and Health Services

By: Josh Jackson, Information Security Policy and Training Analyst, Department of Social and Health Service (DSHS), US Army Veteran

Josh is a retired U.S Army Sergeant First Class (E7) from Spokane, WA with 21 years of service. He spent his first four years as a Field Artillery Systems Mechanic, and the rest of his career as an Information Technology Specialist (25B). Josh has served as a Battalion automations NCO, Battalion S6 NCOIC, Recruiter, and Brigade S6, network administrator, IT project manager, and a cybersecurity analyst. Josh's duty stations include Fort Lewis (twice – once before it was a joint base, and once after), Camp Hovey, Korea, Fort Riley, KS, Fort Sill, OK (twice), Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and FOB Walton, Afghanistan. He retired in December 2015 and came to work for DSHS as the agency's Information Security Policy and Training Analyst.



Josh joined the DSHS VERG because he wants to help other veterans achieve success after their service. He is passionate about mentoring, and jumps at the chance to help veterans make themselves more appealing to potential employers. Josh is a grandfather of two, has written two books, and shamelessly admits to having an extensive collection of Transformers® toys. He enjoys public speaking, sharing knowledge, road trips, martial arts, and hanging out with his girlfriend.



Tools & Resources For All Veterans

[Veterans Choice Health Care](#): VA health care includes regular checkups with your primary care doctor and access to specialists, such as cardiologists, gynecologists, and mental health providers. You can also get home health care and geriatric care, as well as medical equipment, prosthetics, and prescriptions.

[Connection Veterans to the Health Care they need in Washington](#): Bridging the gap between Health Care and Health Policy.

[WA Pathways to Employment \(Veterans Pages\)](#): Each year thousands of disabled military personnel return to the civilian labor force seeking rewarding and meaningful work. The resources in these pages can help you in your job search and your transition to civilian life.

[Working for Washington State](#) – Check out state employment opportunities and sign up for daily job postings sent to your email inbox.



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Bill Allman (HCA)
Casey Swenson (ECY)
Edwin Maldonado (Volunteer)

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS OR INFORMATION TO DISSEMINATE? SUBMIT YOUR INFORMATION WITH A COMMUNICATIONS REQUEST AND THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM WILL TAKE ACTION!

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